

THELMA AND REN WOOTTON

Thelma Ohlwiler Wootton was born August 10, 1899 to Rhoda Elizabeth Hicken and John Frederick Ohlwiler. Her birth brought great rejoicing to her parents and sister, Venola, as the doctor had

429

said that there would be no more children after her father's serious back injury. The doctor was in error because after Thelma's birth, four more children, Nellie May (Shafter), LeOra (Lindsay), Wendell and Ferrin blessed the Ohlwiler household.

Thelma was five years old when her family moved to the big red brick house at First East and 500 South in Heber City. This move made them members of the Heber Third Ward.

As a child Thelma enjoyed family picnics, parties at Luke's Hot Pots, and chokecherrying excursions. It was even fun to help her father in the hayfield and big vegetable garden. Riding her horse was a special pleasure. She loved school and she and her friends acted out the history lessons, fairy tales, or books they had avidly pursued. She attended the old Central School and Wasatch High School where she was in school plays and gave many readings. After graduation, she attended the University of Utah for a year. She taught school in Heber for one year before her marriage to Ren Wootton.

Lorenzo (Ren) Attewall Wootton was born in Midway, Utah March 11, 1898, the oldest son of John Alma and Martha Melvina Huffaker Wootton. As a young boy Ren was fascinated with machinery. He took his mother's sewing machine to pieces, oiled every part, and put it back together again. He did the same with the farm machinery. Ren was only fourteen when he operated a movie theater owned by his uncle Will Wootton. Later he operated one in Midway, and worked at the fish hatchery. He was a student at Wasatch High School and played the drums in Karl Bank's orchestra. During World War II Ren served in the United States army in France.

Ren and Thelma were married March 13, 1920. They were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple December 10, 1937. Their first home was in Silver City, Utah, a mining town where Ren began his electrical career. He helped Claud Willes wire a drain tunnel. After living in Silver City, the young couple lived in Smuggler, Colorado, a gold mining camp in the mountains above Telluride, Colorado. Two beautiful daughters, Barbara and Evelyn, were born there.

Their next home was in Columbia, Utah, the coal mine for Geneva Steel. The town was just being built, and Ren, with Harry Blatzacker, wired the place: mine, tipple and town. In 1926 Ren and his family returned to Heber and built their home. Their third

daughter, Madelyn, was born in Heber in 1932. At first Ren was an electrician at the mine in Keetley, but in 1929 he became Superintendent of Power in the Heber Valley. He made many changes and needed improvements in the city's electrical system during his tenure of thirty-six years. He was a dedicated booster of Heber Valley, literally eating, sleeping and dreaming of electricity. He studied all the new techniques and procedures that could result in better service to the valley he loved.

In 1960 Bishop Ray Berg asked Ren and Barton Davis to assume responsibility for all lighting and electricity in the construction of the new Heber Third Ward Chapel. They fulfilled this responsibility admirably. He was an active member of the American Legion and for fifteen years he was head of the Selective Service. He was finance chairman in Heber for the Boy Scouts for many years.

Asthma had weakened Ren's heart and on February 1, 1965 he passed away.

Thelma has always been an enthusiastic and faithful community and church worker. She has served in numerous positions on the L.D.S. Wasatch Stake Boards, and she taught various classes and was an officer in the Heber Third Ward auxiliaries. Thelma put her superb memory and considerable dramatic ability to excellent use. She presented stories, book reviews, readings, lessons, and gave funeral talks all over Wasatch County and in neighboring towns as well. She directed plays, pageants, and road shows, and was thrilled to participate in these productions. She has been a member of the Shakespearean Literary Club for many years. She currently takes turns living with her three daughters, Barbara (Mrs. Ben Lewis), Evelyn (Mrs. Clyde Furner), and Madelyn (Mrs. Don Larsen).

